

March 31, 2009



Planning Department Newsletter

PLANNING COMMISSION SCHEDULES PUBLIC FORUMS

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At its March meeting, the Planning Commission set a schedule for public forums on two separate topics. On April 22, the Commission will accept public input regarding a proposal by the League of Women Voters to require real estate developers to hold a neighborhood meeting on major projects before submitting formal applications to the city. Then, on April 29, the Commission will solicit public comment on a draft plan for expansion of the city's urban growth area. Both sessions will take place in the City Hall Council Chambers starting at 7:30 p.m.

The April 22 forum on pre-application neighborhood meetings has been a while in the making. The League of Women Voters originally requested city consideration of this idea back in the fall of 2007. Then, last summer, the League followed up with a letter asking the Commission to place the matter on its docket. In the League's correspondence regarding this subject, it states "there is an urgent need for more public discussion early in the planning

process in Pullman to ensure civil and reasoned discourse as our city grows." While setting up this forum, Commission members indicated that the proposal has merit, but there are several potential pitfalls, such as costs and delays for developers, that must be explored prior to making any sort of recommendation on the matter.

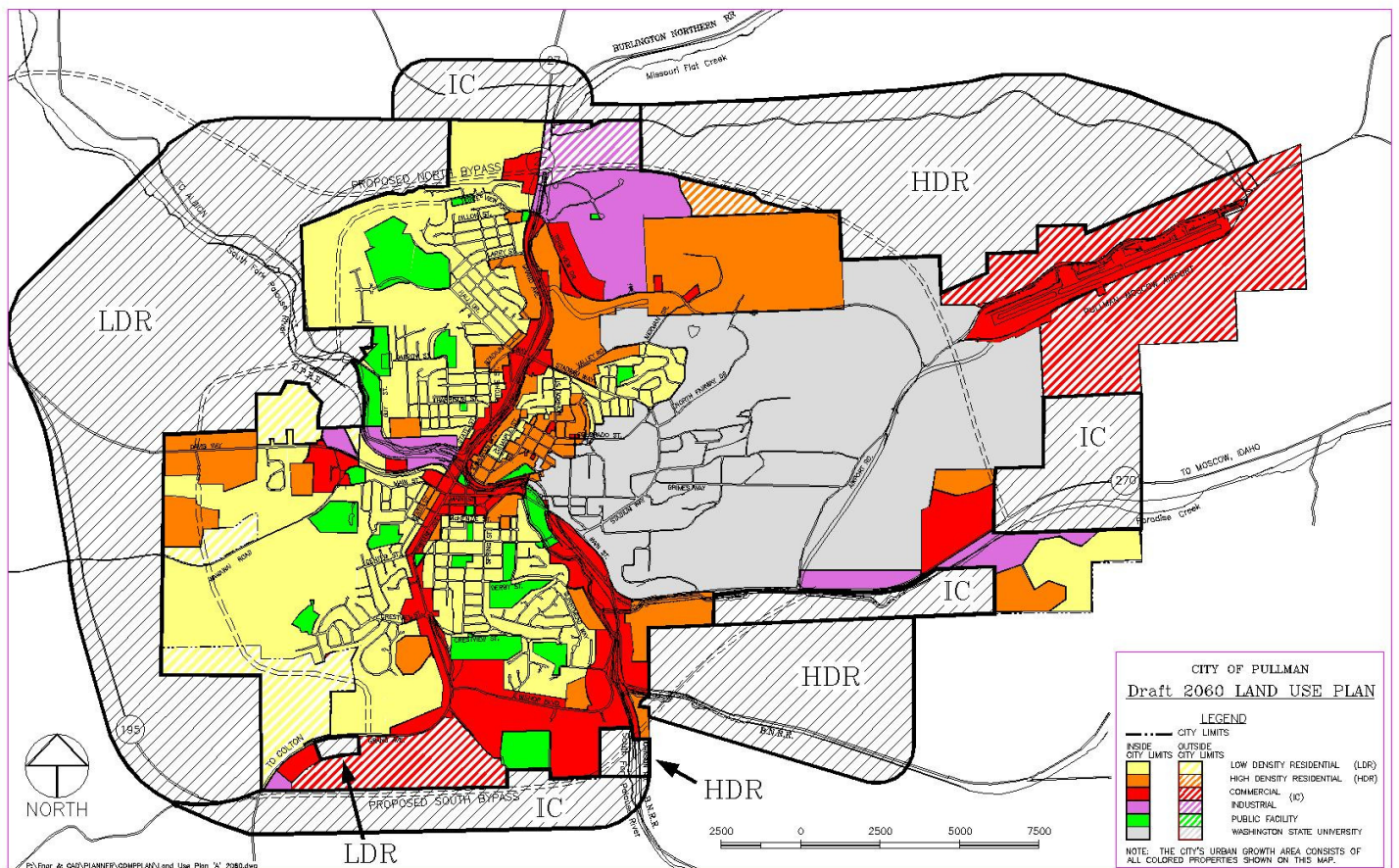
The forum on April 29 will focus on the urban growth area (UGA), defined as the land both inside and outside the city limits that the community expects to grow into within a certain period of time. After our experience with significant local growth over the past 15 years, the City Council asked the Commission to reexamine the city's existing UGA (adopted in 1999) to ensure there is an adequate supply of land available for future development. The Commission, thinking long-term, is evaluating a proposed UGA to address city needs for the next 50 years. Recently, planning staff performed an analysis to determine the amount of property needed by the city over that amount of time (under the

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assumption that Pullman's current population of 27,150 would increase to 46,000 by the year 2060), and determined that more land would be demanded in residential, commercial, and industrial categories. During the latter part of 2008, the Commission discussed various options for distributing potential future growth, and selected one alternative for presentation to the public at the upcoming forum on April 29. This "Draft 2060 Land Use Plan" is

shown below. On this map, the proposed expansion of the UGA is shown with wide diagonal stripes, identified with the labels "LDR" (Low Density Residential), "HDR" (High Density Residential) or "IC" (Industrial/Commercial).

Anyone who is interested in the subjects described above is encouraged to attend one or both of the public forums to participate in the proceedings. The Planning Commission will welcome all comments!



ASSISTANCE OFFERED FOR FIRST-TIME HOME BUYERS

Over the winter months, the Whitman County Community Action Center assembled representatives from various community organizations to attempt to develop more affordable housing options for local citizens. The organizations represented at the meetings thus far include the city, WSU, Pullman Regional Hospital, Pullman School District, financial institutions, local housing coalitions, real estate companies, economic development agencies, and land developers. To date, the group has discussed community housing needs, availability of credit, existing and proposed housing supply, home prices, and zoning standards affecting potential housing options.

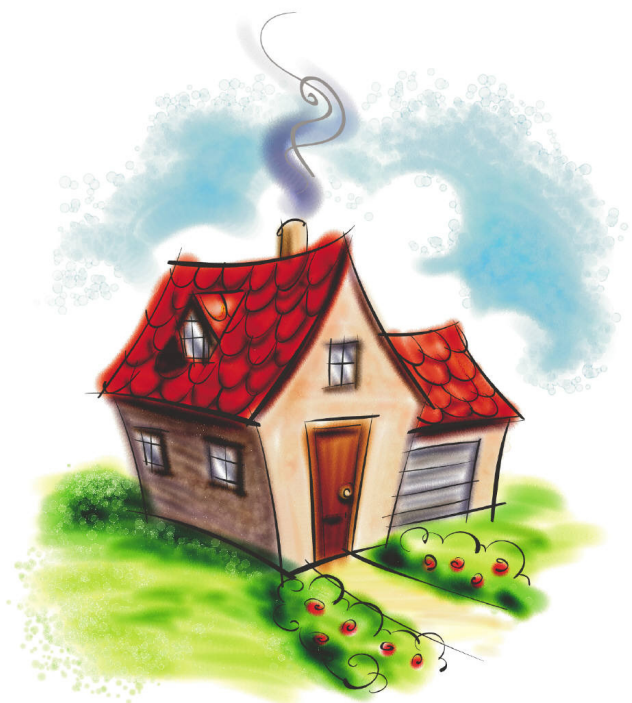
One of the primary issues under consideration by this panel is the affordability of housing for first-time home buyers. Fortunately, the Federal American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (also known as the “stimulus bill”) signed into law last month provides some help in this regard. This Act authorizes a tax credit of up to \$8,000 for qualified first-time home buyers purchasing a principal residence between January 1 and November 30, 2009. (A “first-time home buyer” is defined in the law as a party who has not owned a principal dwelling during the three-year period prior to the purchase.) Qualified individuals acquiring any kind of home—new or resale—are eligible for the tax credit, although the credit is reduced for buyers with a modified adjusted gross income of more than \$75,000 for single taxpayers and \$150,000 for married taxpayers filing a joint return.

With the April 15 tax filing deadline approaching, the Internal Revenue Service earlier this month issued a news release about this first-time home buyer tax credit. The IRS stated in its narrative that there are several different ways that people can receive the credit, even if they have already filed their tax return. The filing options are:

- a) file an extension (taxpayers who haven’t yet filed their 2008 returns but are buying a home soon can request a six-month extension to October 15);
- b) file now and amend later (taxpayers due a sizable refund for their 2008 tax return but who also are considering buying a house in the next few months can file their return now and claim the credit later);
- c) amend the 2008 tax return (taxpayers buying a home in the near future who have already filed their 2008 tax return can file an amended tax return);
- d) claim the credit in 2009 (for some taxpayers [including those who expect less income in 2009 than received in 2008], it may be beneficial to wait and claim the credit next year when they file a 2009 tax return).

The IRS website (<http://www.irs.gov/>) provides additional guidance on this topic.

The group assembled by the Community Action Center intends to publicize affordable housing programs such as this first-time home buyer tax credit to help community members find homes in the Pullman area at a reasonable price. Watch for future editions of this newsletter for more information on efforts to make housing more affordable in the Palouse region.





Pending Land Use Applications

Displayed below are land use applications submitted to the planning or public works department or city-generated proposals for planning provisions that require a public meeting, public notice, or site plan review in accordance with the city code.

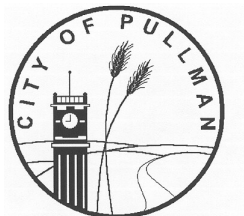
PROJECT	DESCRIPTION	LOCATION	STATUS
Certified Local Government Program	establish historic preservation program for community	citywide	CC requested ordinance revisions on 1/20; ad hoc committee met on 2/9 to address ordinance revisions; CC meeting expected in April or May to act on ordinance
Hinrichs Annexation	annex 37 acres to the city	west of Sunnyside Park and north of SW Old Wawawai Road	applicant revising legal description of property
Askins Zoning Designation (Z-08-2)	establish R3 zone for 35.8-acre parcel	along SE Johnson Avenue, 2,000 feet south of SE Old Moscow Road	PC recommended R1 designation on 3/25; CC meeting tentatively scheduled for 4/28
Schneider Administrative Variance Application (AV-09-1)	erect off-premise real estate sign	southeast corner of NW Davis Way and NW Cory Lane	applicant seeking permission from property owner
Well House No. 8/Booster No. 10 site plan (08-3)	construct pumping station for city potable water system	605 SE Derby Street	staff requested project engineer to revise site plan
CAC Transitional Housing site plan (08-5)	develop 9-unit transitional housing complex on 3.8-acre site	530 NW Davis Way	staff requested applicant to revise site plan
SEL Lab Building site plan (08-6)	construct 36,000-sq-ft lab building on 2.3-acre parcel	2370 NE Hopkins Court	staff requested applicant to revise site plan
Birch Hills Apartments Carports site plan (07-14)	add two carports totaling 2,340 square feet	2200 NE Westwood Drive	staff reviewing site plan
Itani Valley Road Apartments site plan (09-1)	construct 16-unit apartment building on 27,000-sq-ft lot	1245 NE Valley Road	staff requested applicant to revise site plan
Whitcom Communications Tower site plan (09-2)	erect 140-foot-tall communications tower	2305 NE Hopkins Court	staff reviewing site plan

KEY TO ZONING DISTRICTS: R1 Single Family Residential; RT Residential Transitional; R2 Low Density Multi-Family Residential; R3 Medium Density Multi-Family Residential; R4 High Density Multi-Family Residential; C1 Neighborhood Commercial; C2 Central Business District; C3 General Commercial; I1 Light Industrial; I2 Heavy Industrial; IRP Industrial Research Park; WSU Washington State University

KEY TO ABBREVIATIONS: CC: City Council; PC: Planning Commission; BOA: Board of Adjustment; DOE: State Department of Ecology; LC: Landmarks Commission

NOTES: 1) If an applicant fails to act on a pending application for a period of six months, said application will be dropped from the above list.. 2) Numbers in parentheses are planning staff's internal file numbers. 3) Site plan review by city staff is generally conducted for proposed construction of developments other than single family homes, duplexes, or manufactured homes; it does not apply to most construction on the WSU campus.





Pullman, WA 99163

Email: bethany.johnson@pullman-wa.gov

Pullman Planning Department Staff

Pete Dickinson, Planning Director
Jason Radtke, Assistant Planner
Bethany Johnson, Public Works Administrative
Assistant
Kealan Emerson, Public Works Administrative
Specialist
Neil Jeffers, Engineering/Planning Aide
Evan Pond, Engineering/Planning Aide

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WE'RE ON THE WEB!

WWW.PULLMAN-WA.GOV
